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ABSTRACT

This resource bulletin consists of a discussion of the benefits to be gained from starting a school-business partnership and an annotated bibliography of resources dealing with different aspects of school-business partnerships. Included in the bibliography are four overviews of school-business partnerships, four guides to starting a partnership, two works devoted to the adopt-a-school model, two studies of partnerships for special populations, and a description of a partnership for staff development. Addresses of five organizations to contact for more information on partnerships and bibliographic citations of two introductory references dealing with partnerships are also provided. (MN)

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resource bulletin

NATIONAL CENTER ON EFFECTIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Number 2, Spring 1987

School of Education
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Collaborative ventures, or partnerships between schools and businesses, are widely hailed. Why is the idea of the private sector involving itself in the education of American youngsters so appealing? The link between education for its own sake—the joy of learning, the reward of an enlightened life—coupled with a potentially secure position for a youngster in the work force is attractive, but what can schools and corporations really gain from such ventures?

Obvious contributions from the private sector include financial support, special training experiences and jobs for students. The business community might also provide assistance in curriculum development, teacher development, and organizational planning. Certainly school-corporate collaboration may ease school-to-work transitions for many youngsters and career awareness may be simultaneously heightened. Whether these hypothetical benefits ever come to fruition depends, of course, upon the nature of partnerships in particular communities, the particular type of local businesses, and the special goals and objectives of the partnership itself.

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We reviewed literature for administrators and businesspeople on start-up strategies for partnerships; case studies of different models; and descriptions of partnerships for special populations, such as at-risk students. This resource bulletin offers selected bibliography on school-business partnerships and a list of some organizations active in such ventures. We introduce these resources with a glance at the historical roots of the connection between schools and business. Then we briefly summarize what the literature says to an administrator, asking: What can I count on as benefits to my school? Are there costs that I should be aware of that could result from such partnerships?

Business interest and involvement in schools is not a novel idea. Cuban (1983) says that "compared with the dollars, energy, and political involvement that industrialists and businessmen poured into the turn-of-the-century efforts to vocationalize the high schools, current business involvement pales." The push from business, labor, and social leaders to vocationalize the curriculum in the first two decades of this century was successful. Students began to be trained for future jobs as well as for higher education or for education-for-its-own-sake.

By the 1930s, parents and policymakers looked to the schools as a job training place for their children: education was viewed as a means to a secure and better place in the work force. Youth agencies established by the New Deal remained apart from the public schools but, in performing a service for large numbers of youth who were casualties of the Depression, also managed to reinforce ties between the schools and business. Patriotism further united the schools with business during World War II, when winning the war became a shared, predominant goal of the American public.

Today the use of high schools to prepare youth for jobs is seldom questioned, but a shifting economy has changed the significance of this trend. Previously the vocational movement offered youngsters jobs after high school that often led to promising career possibilities within the firm. Today, such opportunities are more limited, because a larger proportion of jobs ask for much formal education beyond high school, and escalating numbers of youth lack the most basic skills.

The literature indicates that partnerships vary tremendously across the country, in size, scope, and goals. They range from imaginative, well-planned and implemented programs to attractive public relations gestures that lack substance. Benefits include dollars to schools, but contributions tend to be small in comparison to corporate expenditures for other charitable purposes (Cuban, 1983). Improved communication between community leaders, Chambers of Commerce, social service agencies, and schools can result in programs that harness a variety of resources to help kids educationally and occupationally. More advanced curricula, especially in science and technology, may also result from interaction between schools and highly trained authorities in business. But there are costs to consider as well. Some schools have suffered with the donation of outmoded equipment which defeats the purpose of upgrading education. Another problem is providing only dead-end, menial jobs with little educational value (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986) and no career potential.

Yet the possibilities in collaborative ventures between the private and public sector are exciting. Ideally they can lead to substantially increased funds for schools, enhanced school engagement and achievement for special populations (such as at-risk and gifted students) and improved communication between the public and private sectors that ultimately benefits the entire community. Whether you are involved in a partnership and interested in refining your work, or if you are contemplating such a venture, we hope these resources are helpful.

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Suggested resources:

The following bibliography, while not exhaustive, is intended as a general guide to some resources which discuss different aspects of school-business partnerships: general and historical overviews of public-private ventures, what to consider when starting a partnership, the adopt-a-school model, and special programs for special populations.

Overviews of School-Business Partnerships

Center on Evaluation, Development and Research Exemplary Practice Series. (1985-86). *School-business partnerships*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.

The volume is divided into substantial sections, each dealing with a different aspect of school-business partnerships. Material covered includes varying perspectives on partnerships, profiles of partnerships in action, and guidelines for developing and maintaining partnerships.

Cuban, L. (1983, Winter). Corporate involvement in public schools: A practitioner-academic's perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 85, (2), 183-203.

A brief historical analysis of corporate involvement in public schools places the present wave of public-private ventures in a useful context. Cuban also examines the business community's role in inspiring confidence in schools as well as offers a view of educators' involvement in public/private ventures. Specific pointers for superintendents' use in dealing with the business community are included, with particular emphasis on evaluating the set of competencies developed by the business community for schools.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (1985, Winter). *Industry-Education Partnership Guidelines*. Quincy, MA: Author.

This practical handbook emphasizes the "how-to's" of partnerships, discussing the following areas: What partnerships are, why schools and businesses form partnerships, how partnerships begin, what is required to maintain a partnership, and what the keys are to partnership success. It includes a list of written resources on this topic.

National School Volunteer Program, Inc. (1981). *Partners for the 80's: Business and education*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

The emphasis in this publication is on the role of the volunteer in public-private partnerships, and it describes several model partnership programs in existence, including their objectives, structure, and implementation of goals. The training and use of volunteers is carefully described in a concise fashion.

Starting a Partnership

Chamber of Commerce of the United States. (1984). *Business & education: Partners for the future*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

The business that is interested in ways to enhance education in its community will find this publication includes helpful ideas, including the suggestion that businesspeople consider a variety of involvements in local schools such as political action, becoming community volunteers, involvement in program planning, evaluation and recognition/awards. The publication can be used by the school administrator to gain a broader understanding of businesses' perspective.

Houston Independent School District. (1984, November). *Partnerships in Education*. A handbook for potential use by other school districts, this describes the Houston VIPS Business/School partnerships, including steps for development and an extensive review of recruitment materials, including samples used. School support materials are included.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (1983, Fall). *Creating school-business partnerships*. Quincy, MA: Author.

Although this handbook was developed to assist local communities in developing school-business partnerships, its material is applicable on a much broader scale. It includes a look at six case studies, which range from a "learning to Earn Alternative Program" to a "Tri-Lateral Council for Quality Education." It also describes the development of partnerships in Massachusetts and includes a summary chapter of practical start-up guidelines.

Ruffin, S. C. (1983). *School-business partnerships: Why not? Laying the foundation for successful programs*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Written specifically for secondary school administrators, this monograph reviews expectations of schools, staff involvement and support, expectations of businesses, steps to building the partnership, and an overview of successful programs in operation.

Adopt-a-School Model

Atlanta Partnership of Business & Education, Inc. (1984,

March). *Adopt-a-school handbook*. Atlanta, GA: Author.
One of the nation's largest partnership programs, the Atlanta Partnership of Business & Education, Inc., publishes a comprehensive handbook detailing the adopt-a-school model. It includes a variety of suggested activities, an action plan for implementation, characteristics of a successful adoption, delineation of the roles of key administrators and participants, and tips on overall administration of the endeavor.

Ozmon, H. (1982, January). Adopt-a-school: Definitely not business as usual. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 350-1.
The adopt-a-school model serves as a frame within which Ozmon warns against the dangers of business influence on schools, pointing toward the alteration of the philosophy and curriculum of schools due to private involvement.

Partnerships for Special Populations

Justiz, M.J. & Kameen, M.C. (1987, January). Business offers a hand to education. *Phi Delta Kappa*, 379-383.
Business-school partnerships which have produced model programs for potential high school dropouts are the subject of this article, with a discussion of the sharply diminishing supply of entry-level employees. The authors state that alarm in the private sector over the supply of adequately educated youth for the nation's work force is sparking business involvement in the schools. The article includes brief descriptions of programs in operation for at-risk students.

Marshall, L. (1983, Fall). Tomorrow's school today. *Educational Horizons*. 62, (1), 22-23.
This article discusses The High School for Engineering Professions in Houston, which is a magnet program, set up as a school-within-a-school for highly talented and gifted students who may wish to major in one of the scientific disciplines in college. The impetus of twenty-eight companies made the design of a highly specialized curriculum possible, and the program currently boasts a 100% college acceptance record.

Partnerships for Staff Development

Johnson, R. R. Investing in education's number one resource. In Center on Evaluation, Development and Research Exemplary Practice Series 1: School-business partnerships. 213-215.
A creative type of school-business partnership, IMPACT II is a staff development program for teachers, established by the Exxon Education Foundation in cooperation with the New York City public schools. IMPACT II was predicated on positive assumptions about teachers and combats the isolation of the classroom teacher by linking teachers interested in improving their teaching with others sharing similar interests. Small grants are made to individuals after they submit descriptions of classroom-based improvements they have implemented.

Organizations to contact for more information:

Atlanta Partnership of Business & Education, Inc.
Urban Life Suite 735
University Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 658-2557

Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street
Suite 300
Denver, CO 80295

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
(703) 860-0200

Partnerships in Education
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
Three Gateway Center
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 392-4518

Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education
National Science Teachers Association
1742 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 328-5840

Introduction references:

Cuban, L. (1983, Winter). Corporate involvement in public schools: A practitioner-academic's perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 85, (2), 183-203.

Greenberger, E., and Steinberg, L. (1986). *When teenagers work: The psychological and social costs of adolescent employment*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

The National Center on Effective Secondary Schools conducts research on how high schools can use their resources to enhance student engagement in order to boost the achievement of all. Its studies deal with the assessment of achievement, higher order thinking in the curriculum, programs for students at risk, working conditions of staff, and strategies for school change. In the Fall and Spring of each year, the Center publishes a newsletter that offers analyses of substantive issues as well as a resource bulletin on practical topics that includes lists of related resources. The Center welcomes reactions from readers, including suggestions for future newsletter and resource bulletin topics.

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Suggested resc

The following bibli-
ography, while not
exhaustive, is intended
as a general guide to
some resources which
discuss different
aspects of school-
business partnership·
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Overviews of School Business Partner

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